DOCUMENT RESUME

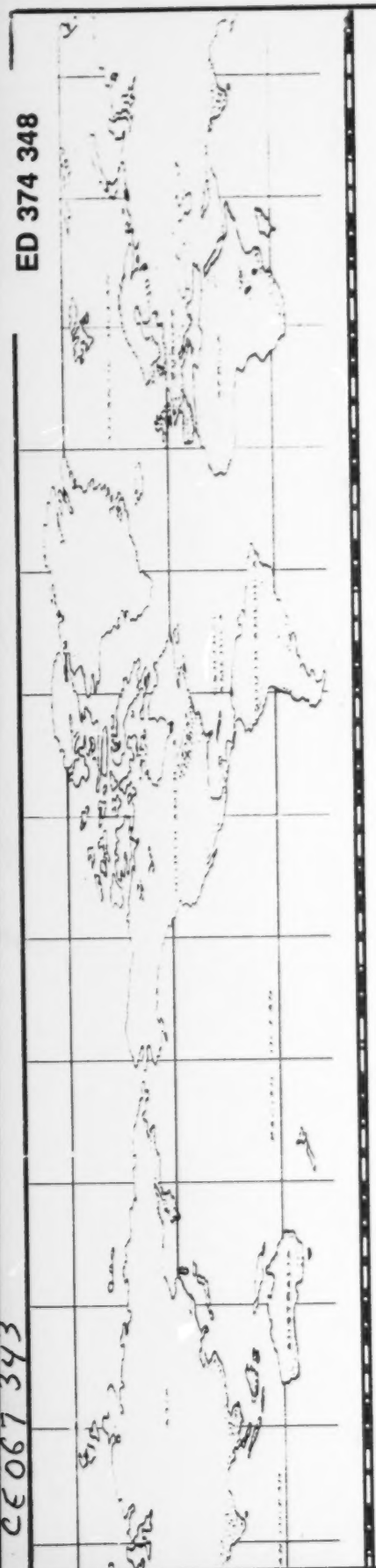
ED 374 348 CE 067 343

AUTHOR	McClure, Larry; And Others
TITLE	Career Guidance Practices in Northern Europe: Implications for U.S. School-to-Work Programs. A Report of the Career Guidance Team of the Comparative Learning Teams Project.
INSTITUTION	Maryland Univ., College Park. Center for Learning and Competitiveness.; Northwest Regional Educational Lab., Portland, Oreg.
SPONS AGENCY	German Marshall Fund of the United States, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	Apr 94
NOTE	54p.; For other reports in this series, see CE 067 344-347.
AVAILABLE FROM	Center for Learning and Competitiveness, School of Public Affairs, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742 ($5).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research/Technical (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Career Awareness; *Career Development; Career Education; Career Exploration; *Career Guidance; *Career Planning; Comparative Education; Developed Nations; *Education Work Relationship; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; Goal Orientation; *Public Policy; Vocational Interests
IDENTIFIERS	Denmark; Germany; Sweden

ABSTRACT

This report presents findings of seven education and business leaders from the United States who visited Denmark, Germany, and Sweden to examine the role of career guidance in these countries. An introduction provides an overview of education and training in the three countries and sets forth lessons learned. The remainder of the report is organized around three career guidance issues and related questions that commonly arise during planning for school-to-work transition opportunities. Each section begins with a brief overview of how the United States approaches the questions to set the stage for a look at how each nation approaches them. The three issues (and related questions) are as follows: (1) policy framework for career guidance (how career development is defined, what institutional systems need to be in place to keep the process alive and well, how to ensure all decisions and services are equitable); (2) information structure for career planning (how to support personal and career awareness as a starting point, ways to help people explore their options and interests directly, what kinds of information everyone needs); and (3) transition from school to work (how to help each person set a tentative career goal, whether there are clear avenues for gaining the necessary skills, what human support systems are available along the way). The appendixes include short profiles of the 32 sites visited by the team, brief descriptions of individual study team members, and a glossary of terms. (YLB)

ED 374 348



Career Guidance Practices in Northern Europe: Implications for U.S. School-to-Work Programs

A joint project of the
Center for Learning and Competitiveness
and the
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Center for Learning and Competitiveness
School of Public Affairs
University of Maryland

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

S. Duerr

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CE067343

The Center for Learning and Competitiveness (CLC) works with American practitioners and policymakers to apply the lessons from international education and training systems to policy development and system design in the United States. Improving the level of workforce preparation is a crucial component to improving productivity levels, boosting economic competitiveness and raising living standards. By helping US policymakers and practitioners understand the best practices and current trends in other countries, CLC helps to ensure that American innovation builds on the experience of others and attempts to achieve outcomes of the highest international standard.

CLC's activities provide access to the people and materials that illuminate the critical principles and components of high quality education and training systems. The range of activities include arranging targeted study programs of international systems, undertaking strategic consultancies for organizations or government departments, leading conferences and seminars in the United States, and publishing reports highlighting best practice and innovative methods for system reform. As part of CLC international study programs, American participants meet with their international colleagues and counterparts to examine the components and configurations of well-integrated education and training systems. They gain new perspectives as well as gather specific tools and information that will directly strengthen practice in the United States.

A priority for CLC's work is the dissemination of findings from international investigations to the education and training community, business and union leaders, politicians, journalists and other opinion leaders in the United States. CLC also works directly with state governments and with leading policy organizations to ensure their reform strategies are shaped and influenced by the experience of quality systems in other countries.

Learning from the international experience has already played an important role in building consensus and developing key leadership for nation-wide development of school-to-work transition systems, and in providing technical assistance in the establishment of these systems. A focus on the performance of international education and training systems enables the United States to learn from other policy successes, to avoid reform paths that have been unsuccessful and to ensure that our innovation will place us at the forefront of international best practice.

CLC was founded in 1992 with a three year grant from the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF). CLC's Executive Director, Anne Heald, created GMF's acclaimed Program on Improving U.S. Competitiveness, and has ten years of experience in running influential exchanges between the United States and Europe. The distinguished Advisory Board to CLC consists of leaders from American political, business, government and union sectors. The work of CLC is also supported by other foundations, state and federal governments. Support is also provided by the University of Maryland's School of Public Affairs, where CLC is based.

CE

Career Guidance Practices in Northern Europe: Implications for U.S. School-to-Work Programs

A Report of the Career Guidance Team of the Comparative Learning Teams Project

Prepared by

Larry McClure, Team Leader - NWREL
Carver Gayton - The Boeing Company
Thomas Hamilton - Merle West Medical Center
Nancy Hargis - Oregon Department of Education
Lila Norris - Education Testing Service
Estevan Rodriguez - Jobs for the Future
Harriet Van Deursen - Office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction

April 1994

A joint project of the Center for Learning and Competitiveness and the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

PREFACE

In February 1993, CLC brought together 25 leading experts from state and federal organizations as well as international leaders, to identify the most pressing questions and problems that confront policymakers and practitioners working to build school-to-work transition systems in the United States. The outcome of that meeting was a consensus that there were five areas in need of immediate in-depth attention:

- Building a System: Governance and Finance
- Developing Standards, Assessment and Credentialing
- Building Partnerships: The Role of Economic Actors
- Designing Quality Programs
- Providing Career Guidance

To address these issues, and with the generous financial support of the German Marshall Fund of the United States, CLC initiated its Comparative Learning Team Project. CLC issued a request for proposal nationwide, and respondents were asked to select one of these areas as the focus for an international learning investigation, developing levels of inquiry in substantial detail and with specific outcomes for their trip. The capacity of teams to effectively disseminate their findings in a way that would positively impact on the development of school-to-work systems in the United States was a key selection criteria.

CLC awarded grants to five organizations in the school-to-work transition field who led, planned and supported a Comparative Learning Team. The grants enabled each team of at least nine people to visit two European sites where sophisticated school-to-work transition systems operate. Each comparative learning team participated in carefully planned 12 to 14 day working sessions in Germany, Denmark, the United Kingdom, Switzerland and Sweden, where they gained direct access to their foreign counterparts and first-hand exposure to European systems.

The members of the learning teams consisted of leading resource people and experts who are catalysts for change in their field at local, state and national levels. Whether they were from the private sector, non-profit organizations or government, team members sought answers to the key strategic issues facing the development of quality school-to-work transition systems in the United States. Hosts in Europe commented on the clear focus of comparative learning team investigations around the pressing lessons of importance to American policymakers. A conference held in January 1994 allowed comparative learning team participants to discuss and refine their reports and findings, and to compare observations about international practice.

Already, the work of the comparative learning teams has had an impact on system-building in the United States. Team members were able to build on their European experience when designing state systems under the guidelines of the new Federal School-to-Work Opportunities Act. Officials in the Departments of Labor and Education, working on school-to-work policies, were briefed by one team member about the comparative learning teams project and team members' observations of European systems. Participants have spoken at numerous conferences, and published comments in newspapers and newsletters. Key findings of the teams are guiding further policy work around key issues such as the engagement of industry in school-to-work programs and in the design of skill standards.

CLC is now pleased to publish the five reports of the comparative learning teams. Each report highlights what the specific team found in their field of investigation, and particularly highlights the implications for American policymakers of European experience. We believe that they will be of equal interest to those who have examined the European models for workforce development previously and those who are being introduced for the first time to international expertise in this field.

For over a decade, American policy leaders have looked to Europe for insight into how to move young people effectively from school to the workforce, while providing them with relevant and valuable skills. The impressive achievements of European systems triggered much enthusiasm in this country about the potential positive impact of reform here. Many supporters of school-to-work reform in the United States first became excited about the potential impact of reform by looking at international best practice and some of the most innovative models of school-to-work transition grew out of exploring European sites.

Now, with the passage of the school-to-work legislation, and with states actively attempting to build school-to-work transition systems that will provide widespread opportunities for young people, the international experience remains highly significant. Issues that challenge American policymakers in building systems, such as developing appropriate funding mechanisms, engaging industry partnership and ensuring relevant standards, have long been at the core of investigation in Europe. Reform in European systems in recent years reflects current thinking about the delivery of quality school-to-work opportunities.

These reports are timely and relevant for American policymakers who not only want to look at the achievements of quality European school-to-work systems, but to explore in more detail the elements that enabled such systems to achieve quality outcomes. As states and sites move to implement comprehensive reform in the United States under this auspices of the School-to-Work Opportunities Act, all five reports will provide valuable information and insight into the best international lessons.

In releasing these reports, CLC would like to thank the German Marshall Fund of the United States for their generous support of the comparative learning teams project. We want to express our thanks to the lead organizations for the project: The Austin Chamber of Commerce, the New Standards Project, The Council of Chief State School Officers, the National Alliance of Business and the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

In particular, we would like to thank the leaders of the five teams who generated such quality learning programs for their teams and led the process of developing these significant reports. To Bob Glover, Davis Jenkins, Glenda Partee, Esther Schaeffer and Larry McClure, our sincere thanks for your dedication and commitment to this valuable learning process.

Anne Heald
Executive Director
The Center for Learning and Competitiveness

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Career Guidance Study Team visited the following agencies and organizations during its November 9-27, 1994, tour of Denmark, Germany, and Sweden. We wish to thank the many people at each site we visited who welcomed us and shared their knowledge and expertise.

We particularly acknowledge the guidance and assistance of the following persons who went beyond the call of duty to help the team with arrangements and to make sure we had an opportunity to visit appropriate places and meet with the "right" people:

- Denmark—Christian Henricson, former exchange student to U.S., Arhus; Jørgen Gravesen and Lars Pedersen, Skoleksonsultenterne, Arhus Skolevæsen; and Taus Randsholt, Danish National Council for Educational and Vocational Guidance, Copenhagen

- Germany—Dr. Jürgen Niemeyer, Physikalishch-Technische Bundesanstalt, Braunschweig; Silvie Niemeyer, former exchange student to U.S., Wolfenbuttel; Gerd Muntner, Carl Gotthard Langhans Schule, Wolfenbuttel; Jürgen Patz, former Volkswagen assembly technician; Dr. Manfred Leve, Budensantstalt für Arbeit, Nurenberg; and Marianne Gersdorf, Landesarbeitsamt Niersachsen-Bremen, Hanover

- Sweden—Patsy Buchmann, Office of Labor and Social Affairs, Embassy of the United States, Stockholm; and Hans Hellblom, Göteborgs Stad Utbildning, Gothenburg

On this side of the Atlantic, leadership for this effort was provided by staff at the Center for Learning and Competitiveness at the University of Maryland's School of Public Affairs who provided overall project direction: Ms. Anne Heald, Center director, Samantha Guerry and Mark Scott, Center associate directors, and Cara Cambria helped shape the study tour research agenda and site visits in Europe. Special acknowledgment is given to Dr. John Coulson at the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) of the U.S. Department of Education for his guidance in the conduct of this work and to Dr. Robert Rath, Dr. Ethel Simon-McWilliams, Joe Jones, and Donnie Benjamin at Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) for providing behind-the-scenes support in project start-up. Barbara Warren-Sams edited the final report.

A Saturday afternoon conversation with 1993 *folkeskole* graduates (about ages 15 to 16), Arhus, Denmark

***What did you do on your* practik?**

Mette: "In my eighth grade *practik* I went to a bakery for one week where I could just go to a shelf and take something down and eat it. It was fun. They said just come in and work and they had a lot of things to do. I also found out that was not what I wanted to do. One night I tried to get up at 4 a.m. and that was very hard. They get off early at 11 a.m., but waking up so early is very hard. In ninth grade I was a week in riding school and I thought, Oh, I'm just going to ride a lot and see how they do everything,' but actually it is very hard. They don't just teach and ride; there is a lot of cleaning and work and responsibilities. It was quite fun even though it was hard. I also learned about how it is to be a trainer."

What would happen if you were in eighth or ninth grade and came home and told your parents or guardians that you wanted to go to the technical school or the commercial school and not the* gymnasium *even though you were capable of getting in?

Maria: "I would have discussed with my parents the results of this decision, but I would not have been forced to go to the *gymnasium*."

Others disagreed: "Our parents would try to guide us to the *gymnasium* even if we wanted to go to technical school. They went to the *gymnasium* when they were young, and they think it is the best."

Did you see some information in* folkeskole *about possible careers you might like?

Peter: "We got a lot of material about the different education you can get. I could have gone to the technical or business school but I chose the *gymnasium* because from the *gymnasium* you could get almost any other education afterward."

Maria: "I was in the same situation as Peter. To be honest, we got the material, but when I had to decide, I knew most about the *gymnasium*."

Peter: "I wanted to go to the technical school, but I wasn't sure if I would have a big problem. It was a bit strange to me. I didn't know much about it."

Marie-Louise: "In the *folkeskole* everything is based on being able to think for yourself. You have to be self-confident. So I think that if your parents said, You have to take the *gymnasium*,' the student would say, No, I want to go to business school,' and the student would end up going to business school. All our processes and subjects are to think for yourself. We discuss instead of conforming. There is a big difference between the *folkeskole* and the *gymnasium*. In *folkeskole*, if you had a problem someone would say, Oh. I see you have a problem. Shall I help you....I see you haven't made your homework.' In the *gymnasium* you are on your own. If you haven't made your homework, too bad. They don't prod you."

Peter: "During the first year of *gymnasium*, we have to make up our minds [what we want to do in life] because in *gymnasium* we have to choose our classes for the second and third year. Our classes actually limit what further education we get. We have to choose the level of math. There is a low level and a middle and high level. If you wanted to go to law school, you have to have the middle English and have a certain [grade point] average."

Maria: "I have a big problem....I don't know what at all I'm going to do in two years when I'm finished [with *gymnasium*], and next year I have to choose the levels and some other subjects. If I choose the wrong thing I may not be able to get the job I want....I will talk to the student counselor about if I have some wishes about a job, what kind of classes I need to take."

Mette: "I was advised by teachers to take the mathematics line rather than the language line in *gymnasium* because it gives more possibilities for future jobs."

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In November 1993, seven education and business leaders from the United States visited Denmark, Germany and Sweden to examine the role of career guidance in these countries. They focused on how individuals, families, and institutions approach the career development process with an emphasis on how children and youth prepare for employment in these relatively small and compact European nations. Recognizing the vast differences in education and economic systems between Northern Europe and the United States, and the important roles that history and culture play in the values placed on work and learning, the team believes strongly that the U.S. career guidance systems to support youth apprenticeship and other school-to-work practices can benefit from adapting promising European strategies. The team further believes these strategies can be implemented whenever forward-looking individuals and agencies are willing to sit together and decide it will happen.

The following six recommendations have implications for policymakers and practitioners alike. Each jurisdiction must decide the role it plays in carrying them out.

Policy Framework for Career Guidance

- Create national, state and local policy councils that will make career guidance services a priority in the United States. We believe the National Career Development Guidelines and the present federal and state occupational information coordinating committees provide a foundation to build on for career development support from childhood through adulthood. As in Denmark, for example, membership on those councils should be expanded to include community groups and business, industry, and labor. State workforce quality councils or similar bodies should devote time on their agendas for career guidance policymaking.

Information Structure for Career Planning

- Create local career information centers as part of the "one stop career centers" concept now currently being discussed in federal legislation aimed at re-employment of adults. In Germany, these multi-service information and referral centers are located in larger communities. In Sweden, such centers are more decentralized. In the United States, they might be housed in high schools, community colleges, and libraries with flexible hours to meet the needs of youth and adults alike. Services from a variety of agencies and organizations might be accessible in these community career information centers, with materials and counseling available in languages other than English.

- The resources available in these centers must reflect the kinds of media and technology that youth and adults find in their everyday life. Computer-based information should apprise youth and adults alike of career opportunities in their community, state, and region of the country and include information on schools, apprenticeships, colleges, universities, the military, Job Corps centers, and private trade schools where education, training, and retraining opportunities are available. Video profiles of the most common

jobs available in their communities and states should be available, produced at the state or national level with the involvement of business, industry, and union organizations, and particularly attuned to equity issues.

- Every young person in the United States should have carefully structured opportunities to explore the world of work as part of their school experiences beginning no later than the eighth grade. These experiences should not be just a few hours in length, but long enough to understand the typical work week at various community workplaces and to see the relationships between school subjects and how adults use those related skills in work environments. Nontraditional occupations should be emphasized to help overcome stereotypes about who is able to do what.

- As part of a comprehensive career center described above, every community should have a clearinghouse staffed with trained personnel who connect employers with schools, other agencies, and organizations that depend on using workplaces for learning, exploration, and service. These may be operated in coordination with chambers of commerce, private industry councils, existing consortia, and nonprofit organizations that have the ability to bring a wide variety of interests to a common table. Employers will appreciate efforts to coordinate the multiple demands on their time and other resources. Employers and other organizations in the databanks should represent a balance of company size, occupational field, and cultural diversity.

Transition from School to Work

- Counselors and others who work with children and youth must have a good understanding of what is happening in the world of work today. A variety of strategies should be considered, including labor market information for professional educators acquired by first-hand observation and regular access to employment trend data. Gathering together counselors and teachers from a variety of youth-serving agencies (a common practice in Denmark and Sweden) helps them keep current with occupational needs. Mentors who host youth and young adults in workplaces must also be trained in how to describe the full range of occupational opportunities in that field and how school preparation relates to worksite skills.

CONTENTS

Preface i

Acknowledgments iii

Executive Summary vi

Introduction 1

- Overview of Education and Training in the Three Countries 2
- Some Assumptions We Started With 3
- Lessons Learned 5

Policy Framework for Career Guidance 9

- Career Development as a Lifelong Process 9
- Institutional Support Systems for Career Development 12
- Ensuring Equity in Career Decision Making 14

Information Structure for Career Planning 17

- Building Personal and Career Awareness 17
- Exploring Career Options 21
- Career Information Support Systems 23

Transition from School to Work 27

- Making Career Decisions 27
- Moving Along a Career Pathway 29
- Human Support Systems for Career Development 32

Appendix 35

- Glossary of Terms 35
- Study Team Members 38
- Study Tour Itinerary 40

INTRODUCTION

At first glance, to visit a community in Denmark, Germany, or Sweden is to wonder whether you've simply driven into another U.S. city. Texaco, McDonalds, Avis, Pizza Hut and Honda signs beckon; freeways and malls are busy during workdays; ATMs instantly draw cash from your personal account 9,000 miles away; CNN's Wolf Blitzer brings International News reports on the half-hour, and the people you meet on the street, in pubs and restaurants, at workplaces, and in schools share the same smiles, worries, and interests as your own family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers you left at home.

The Career Guidance Comparative Learning Team spent nearly three weeks between November 10 and 26, 1993, exploring how Danes, Germans, and Swedes approach career development and guidance issues in a time when international connections erase time and distance as barriers and economic decisions in Beijing and Berlin affect workers' jobs in Bombay and Buffalo. We were intrigued by dozens of policies and practices that speak directly to needs and issues that we in the United States are only beginning to decipher. When someone says, "It can't be done," we are now armed with precedents about what can happen when willing people decide career development and guidance is a significant priority. We are also prepared to show how some European approaches to career guidance could fit into our federal, state, and local practice if the right circumstances prevail.

This report is organized around three career guidance issues and related questions that commonly arise during planning for school-to-work transition opportunities. For each issue, we start with a brief overview of how we in the U.S. approach the question as a stage setter for a short look at how each nation we visited approaches this area.

Policy Framework for Career Guidance

- How do we define career development?
- What institutional systems need to be in place to keep the process alive and well?
- How do we ensure all decisions and services are equitable?

Information Structure for Career Planning

- How can we support personal and career awareness as a starting point?
- Are there ways we can help our people explore their options and interests directly?
- To support the above stages, what kinds of information will everyone need?

Transition from School to Work

- After trying out these options, how can we help each person set a tentative career goal?
- Once the goal is shaped, are there clear avenues for gaining the necessary skills?
- What human support systems are available to help persons along the way?

An appendix includes a glossary of terms and a brief description of individual study team members and the study tour itinerary.

Overview of Education and Training in the Three Countries

Denmark. Danish students typically attend *folkeskoles* from grades one to nine following a rigorous curriculum that, for example, prepares all students with two foreign languages (English is required). Most students will have one class teacher for much of this time. At grade nine, students and parents or guardians have several options. If students need more maturity and "stretch time," they may choose to enroll in a 10th year that encourages personal growth and a chance to solidify interests. About ages 15 to 16, they may embark on a pathway toward university entry (via the *gymnasium*) or employment preparation (the "sandwich system" with alternating periods of classroom/laboratory preparation in a community-college type environment and "hands-on" experience in a real or simulated work setting). The sandwich program has two avenues for entry as well: a student may find an employer willing to sign a training agreement immediately, an option more difficult in hard economic times, or a student may enroll in a commercial, social, or technical college (school) for first exposure to a field of study.

Germany. German children stay in elementary school through grade six at which time critical choices must be made about which of three types of secondary instruction will be pursued: the *gymnasium* (competitive academic studies), the *realschule* (rigorous courses focused on career applications) or the *hauptschule* (survival skill focus, minimum achievement). In the United States, these schools would be roughly equivalent to the college track (university-bound), the vocational-technical/applied academics track (Tech Prep), and the general track (courses that lead nowhere in particular). Students may stay in the *gymnasium* until ages 19 or 20 trying to pass the tests for the *abitur*; *realschule* graduates typically move into the dual system or take special courses in their school that also lead to college entry for applied degrees (e.g., civil engineering, accounting); *hauptschule* graduates will likely wind up in low-level jobs since their skills may not enable them to keep up in the high performance apprenticeship (dual) system.

Sweden. As of 1991, the Swedish educational system dramatically changed from strong federal controls to a model that places greater responsibility at the local level. National responsibilities

include defining curriculum parameters, evaluating and following up to ensure accountability, and equivalency across the country. Each municipality determines how funds will be allocated according to a local education plan.

Some basic structural elements prevail: all students will attend compulsory school for nine years, extending from ages 7 to 15. Secondary education resembles the career pathway structure now being implemented by some U.S. high schools. Swedish students choose among 16 career clusters, each lasting three years (there used to be hundreds of these "study paths"). All programs are built around competency-based curriculum modules that can be mixed and matched according to individual interest with students assessed on criterion-based measures rather than norm-referenced tests. Designers believe knowledge cannot be viewed as a finished product isolated from its context. Students are encouraged to exercise influence over their study programs, reflecting the pervasive Northern European emphasis on individual responsibility. Students spend a minimum of 15 percent of their time in community workplaces, linking theory and practice, except in the "university bound" programs (aesthetics, social sciences, natural sciences) where this "hands-on" experience is not required. Business, industry, and labor are expected to play major partnership roles in the occupationally focused programs. In some cases, as in Germany and Denmark, the firms themselves will actually operate comprehensive secondary school programs. For students out of the mainstream, Youth Centers are available to address the alternative learning and living styles many young people bring to school. Education programs are always open to Swedish youth and adults throughout their lifetimes.

Some Assumptions We Started With

The study team began this project with a number "pictures in our heads" about what we would find in the three countries. Having the chance to meet real people encountering day-to-day realities was enlightening:

Myth: *European youth will choose vocational-technical training in lieu of higher education because these skills lead to high-status, high-paying fields.*
Reality: A university degree is viewed by many European parents as their children's ticket to success; meanwhile openings in programs leading to sophisticated technical fields or even mainline occupational fields are being passed by or delayed until the student can't "make the mark" for university entry and must then enter the vocational training system later.

Myth: *Family influence and background are not factors in the schools and programs students choose.*
Reality: Students from "white collar" families tend to aim toward white collar occupations and persons from "blue collar" homes often pursue similar educational paths as their mothers and fathers. Immigrants have difficulty gaining access to quality programs for a variety of reasons.

Myth: *European educators are well connected to workplaces and are valuable sources of information when youth begin making career decisions.*
Reality: Most teachers at all levels (even in vocational-technical schools) seem to be isolated from the workplace and not well equipped to relate what happens in schools to future jobs students may have or to advise on career opportunities—with the exception of teacher-counselors who have received special training for these roles.

Myth: *Women and minorities have equal access to programs and employment.*
Reality: Women and minorities are not proportionately represented either in preparation programs or in high-demand or higher-paying occupations.

Myth: *Where a person lives makes no difference in the quality or kinds of programs available.*
Reality: Students living in rural communities tend to have fewer opportunities for comprehensive, high-quality education programs, and their career horizons are limited unless they are motivated to explore options and access resources in larger cities; use of distance learning technologies to bring educational resources to rural areas is not apparent.

Myth: *European youth move into the workplace at an earlier age than U.S. students.*
Reality: Delays in entering the workforce, especially when the economy is sluggish, are not uncommon; in Denmark, traveling or studying abroad for a few months is an acceptable (even rewarded) decision; in Germany, living with family while working/learning even as a young adult is often the rule and not the exception.

Myth: *Youth in the apprenticeship system enter immediately after completing the appropriate common school program.*
Reality: A growing number of students are entering apprenticeships and other job-preparation pathways after completing the equivalent of our associate degree even though some of their peers have a two- or three-year head start in occupational training.

Myth: *European youth do not hold part-time jobs during the school year because they must concentrate on their studies.*
Reality: Holding a part-time job during adolescence is growing in practice, particularly if teens wear the latest Levi's and listen to current CDs. This is less true for students in the upper *gymnasium* years. On the other hand, there is not a "youth job market" as in the U.S. where business (particularly the service and retailing sector) relies heavily on youth workers.

Myth: *European youth are favorably inclined to "blue collar" jobs because there is honor and dignity associated with being a craftsperson or technician.*
Reality: High-paying jobs in manufacturing technology that carry images of dirty fingernails are shunned by students on a search for more glamorous occupations such as hospitality and tourism.

Myth: *Funds are available to provide adequate personnel for guidance functions.*
Reality: Guidance specialists and counselors are faced with high numbers of students and clients to serve.

Myth: *Employers don't worry about the bottom-line impact of apprentices on their payrolls because a solid learning program will eventually pay off. They will make sure the apprentice has a well-rounded experience.*
Reality: Apprentices are openly sought by employers because they provide a low-cost labor source. Assurance that apprentices will learn a wide range of skills with a particular employer is difficult to promise, though in Denmark arrangements are often made to find other sites where apprentices can see different applications. Larger companies seem more committed to comprehensive skill development and cross-training in a variety of work areas.

Myth: *European systems are able to gather and report occupational information quickly because of tight government controls.*
Reality: Data on what's happening in today's fast-changing marketplace are difficult to maintain and disseminate.

Myth: *When European youth move from the "secondary" to the "postsecondary" system, they are well prepared for the next step.*
Reality: College and university officials complain that a growing number of incoming students are not equipped to handle the rigors of postsecondary education coursework

Myth: *Trade and craftspersons will always be assured of good, well-paying positions because consumers are willing to foot the bill.*
Reality: Services that have traditionally been handled by skilled crafts and tradespersons are being undermined by a growing numbers of "do-it-yourselfers"; at least one country offers a tax incentive to hire expert plumbers and electricians for home repairs.

Lessons Learned

In short, very real differences exist between Northern Europe and the United States that reflect our different histories, values, economic structures, and education systems. While we heard that these three nations had "solved" some of the perplexing human resource development problems we face, we actually found the United States and Europe share many of the same pressing issues: high unemployment rates, increasing youth crime and gang activities, growing numbers of immigrants, underemployment, growing numbers of teen parents, and a tendency for young people, educators, parents or guardians, and employers to avoid making changes individually and systemwide to achieve higher personal creativity and productivity levels. After some 35 visits with schools, colleges, employers, families, and groups of youth and young adults, our team believes strongly that U.S. career guidance systems to support youth apprenticeship and other school-to-work practices can benefit from adapting promising European strategies. At the same time, we are prepared to make equally important suggestions to our European colleagues as each of our nations strives to put its personal, family, education, and economic houses in order.

Some of the most important lessons we learned from our European study tour are:

Policy Framework for Career Guidance

- ***Turf issues can be overcome***. Government agencies, employers, unions, and a variety of advocacy groups are able to meet to shape and carry out human resource development policies. Everyone seems to agree that career development and guidance is a priority that deserves funding and follow through.

- ***Unemployment dollars shifted into education and training may be a better investment.*** Denmark's policy of supporting persons in the education and training system rather than using those same dollars for unemployment or welfare demonstrates that human resource development may be a better use of public funds. Keeping young adults' skills sharp in a broad career domain and thus preparing them for Europe's economic turnaround is seen as a better choice than allowing them to stay home and do nothing. Danes can only draw unemployment benefits for two months before they must be engaged in either a productive activity (volunteer work) or schooling.

- ***When given responsibility, students seem more motivated to learn.*** Compared to students in the United States, students in Northern Europe seem to feel more responsible for themselves and more self-motivated to learn. It's hard to say if and how guidance plays a role in this, but having a goal in mind is apparently a strong motivating influence. Career counseling starts early in these countries, with students and parents playing a large role in the process. Having to make decisions about educational alternatives helps make the point that education and work are connected.

Information Structure for Career Planning

- ***Career counseling must start early to be effective***. All three countries make deliberate efforts to provide career education and support to children and youth in the equivalent of American grades six through nine. Once a class teacher passes a student to upper grade faculty, specialists begin to provide career development services, and youth are encouraged to explore what economic and individual responsibility are all about. Week-long individual forays into the community, almost unheard of in U.S. school districts, help youth test and become familiar with the world they are about to enter.

- ***Alternative approaches to assessment and career preparation will work***. While testing is used extensively to screen persons out of programs and students feel considerable stress as they approach various gateway points, safeguards are in place and optional pathways open. Blame is likely to be shared by everyone concerned, not just the youth or adult. Decision makers recognize that the institutional setting must change and not the individual. If

there are other ways a person can reach a career goal, those doors will be opened. For example, written tests are often balanced by oral examinations, with a proctor (student advocate) present to ensure fairness. Demonstrations and group projects help students prepare for a world that will judge them on competencies mastered both as individuals and as members of teams. In universities and colleges in Denmark, the government is willing to allow students a chance to try a field of study for a few months, but if they can't pass a minimum threshold test, it's time to make another decision.

- ***Employers will bring youth into their workplaces.*** Work-based learning in Europe ranges from one- to three-week full-shift *practiks* for all young persons ages 15 to 19 to 20-week on-the-job training; from two- or three-year apprenticeships that alternate between classrooms and hands-on experience to comprehensive schools actually operated in the workplace by an employer. Tax incentives do not seem to be as large an incentive as the employers' feeling that it's a moral imperative to give the future generation the skills it will need to take charge someday.

  While employers often receive some value from student productivity (especially from longer-terms apprentices), the high turnover of students on "job shadow" and several-day experiences may offset any bottom-line gains. Employers do benefit from having first choice of candidates whose performance they have observed for an extended period of time. Full-time apprenticeships are more difficult to arrange in times of high unemployment, but business and government still find ways to offer these opportunities even though a job may not always be available at a site at the end of training. For younger adolescents, shorter exposures can be the most valuable career development learning experience of all, not for the job skills learned but for the work socialization that occurs.

- ***Technology makes career information come alive.*** Youth and adults alike are attracted to well-designed, contemporary information in formats that speak to them. Using computers and video in this era of laser disks, CD ROM, and interactive media are only natural. The investment to keep these resources up to date is substantial, but the payoff comes when youth can make tentative judgments on occupations based on reality and not fantasy.

- ***Community career centers actually work.*** Having central locations where information and experts are easily accessible and "user friendly" can be a very good investment. Such centers can be used much like public libraries with youth and adults alike sharing the same resources and facilities, though counselors and some materials can be differentiated to address different learning styles and personal needs. Sweden establishes these centers in various areas of cities, while Germany relies on "one-stop" locations.

- ***The class teacher is a mentor who's always there.*** The longer students spend quality time with two or perhaps three empathetic teachers over a nine- or twelve-year period, the stronger the child's foundation will be for future education and training decision making. This continuity may likely have the highest payoff for positive self-concept development, a key ingredient for personal and career success as an adult. However, having several significant adults who know what's happening in a young person's life during the formative years is often difficult to achieve when students are mobile or in schools where teacher turnover might be high.

- ***Trained guidance specialists provide a valuable set of services.*** Thanks to standards set at the national level in Denmark and Germany, but with leeway locally on how services will be delivered, youth and adults are receiving a continuum of career development assistance. While the system is not perfect, agencies are able to plan and work together even though they have differing system mandates (e.g., career education and information for youth is delivered by a separate set of people than those serving adults). Specifications and job descriptions can clearly prescribe what should happen when and persons with guidance responsibilities should be trained not only in delivery of those services but have experience themselves in private sector workplaces so they have credibility. Trade associations and postsecondary training institutions can ensure their pipelines are full by spending considerable time in lower schools and in local communities to market opportunities their fields offer. Personal and social counseling functions in schools are needed but must not subsume vocational counseling.

- ***Parents and guardians need as much information as youth.*** It is easy to ignore the single most dominant influence, perhaps, in youth education planning and career decision making: parents or guardians. And parents in Europe are confused about the reforms that have been made or are underway in their education and training systems. They remember the way things used to be and have little information about how things will be at the turn of the century as their children take their places in a world of work that never holds still. However, parents are expected to participate in the decisions that shape their children's educational futures. And, as we encountered in Sweden, they willingly show up when school meetings are held!

POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR CAREER GUIDANCE

Each nation must provide a set of policies and guidelines that provide a framework for what leaders at the local level will do. They start with leadership at the national level and get translated into state and local systems. Certain priorities, like ensuring equity, must be addressed throughout the process.

Career Development as a Lifelong Process

United States. Given the U.S. commitment to education as a state function which is further decentralized by giving local boards of directors authority for designing and delivering education and training programs, no central national policy has been developed for career guidance and counseling through public education systems. However, professional associations promote greater accountability for counselor preparation, and a set of standards called the "National Career Development Guidelines" provide a starting point for communities concerned about the employability of its people. For the purposes of this report, we shall use the guidelines as a framework for our examination of Northern European approaches to career development and how those ideas might impact policy and practice in the United States.

Career development competencies are suggested in three content areas: (1) self-knowledge, (2) educational and occupational exploration, and (3) career planning. More specific competencies are suggested for gradual incorporation into the four levels where formal delivery and assessment can more easily occur: elementary, middle/junior high school, high school, and adulthood. The competencies include:

- *Self-knowledge*—positive self concept development, effective interpersonal skills, and ability to cope with change
- *Educational and Occupational Exploration*—ability to see the relationship between educational achievement and career futures; awareness of the need for lifelong learning; skills in locating and analyzing career information; knowledge of how to be a good applicant and employee; and understanding of how work benefits society
- *Career Planning*—ability to apply decision making skills; understanding of how work relates to personal and family life; understanding of changing male and female roles at home and work; and skills to make career transitions.

Resource materials available from the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (NOICC) suggest activities that education and training providers can use to teach these competencies. The National Career Development Association is also actively involved in promoting these concepts. Otherwise, leadership is still a state-level responsibility and scattered even further among local school districts, community colleges, private industry councils, vocational rehabilitation agencies, welfare agencies, Job Corps programs, and on and on.

communication skills of recent immigrants, technological devices are provided to persons whose physical conditions would seemingly bar them from performing certain tasks, interpreters might be available for students who need instructions read or signed to them.

Despite these efforts and others, a review of vocational training programs in the United States typically finds that young women and men still tend to choose stereotypical occupations and that far too few students of color are represented across the occupational spectrum in proportion to their representation in the general population. To ensure that education agencies are meeting equity and Civil Rights requirements, federal vocational education dollars provide for an equity specialist in each state whose job is to encourage education and training providers to overcome both blatant and subtle barriers as they attract and prepare persons for jobs in the future. Teaching students to recognize and deal with equity issues in the workplace, such as sexual harassment, are beginning to be part of career development curricula.

Denmark. Career pathways for young women and minorities in Denmark seem to be limited. Disproportionate numbers of females are represented in traditional occupations such as cosmetology and daycare. Our observations in classrooms suggest that, as in the United States, students in Denmark still receive differential treatment based on ethnicity and gender. The need to build "equal worth" into guidance activities has been recognized across the nation. Equal opportunity legislation is designed to promote equity in the classroom by addressing teaching techniques, awareness of nontraditional career opportunities, and course selection. Each regional office now includes an equal worth specialist whose role is similar to the state-level specialists in the United States. Targeted efforts and resources have also been allocated to attract and nurture immigrant students whose numbers are rising across the country. Our team visited an inner city *folkeskole* in Copenhagen where native Danes are in the minority. Immigrants must meet the same entry standards for post-*folkeskole* programs which means that considerable time and effort are given to mastering the Danish language. Special production schools or "youth schools" and subsidized jobs help immigrants gain basic jobs skills. Despite these efforts, minority groups seem to be under-represented in family (living)-wage occupations.

Germany. Our team saw less formal evidence that equity is a major consideration in career guidance delivery in Germany if supportive legislation or staff responsibilities for this function are indicators. However, our review of materials at the BIZ indicates efforts are made to ensure that role models and examples are bias free. We were also impressed by efforts at Volkswagen (Braunschweig) where the goal is 20 percent female apprentices. As one Volkswagen official observed, "Women will not buy a product from businesses that do not employ women." Our interpreter, one of the union-sponsored counselors at the training center, was female. As we visited schools and colleges, however, the team observed few female role models at the *hauptschule* level on staff, in building art work, or on bulletin boards. However, enrollment in nontraditional programs seemed to be good. At the *realschule* level and in technical training programs, we observed that both female and male students participate in nontraditional areas and heard that female apprentices in nontraditional areas earn less and have less career advancement than their male peers.

Institute of Labor (Bundesanstalt für Arbeit or BFA) and the Rectors' Conference provides a national framework which in turn is reflected at the state level. While there is general agreement that career guidance is important, the primary delivery of those services is through BFA staff whose state-level branches work out agreements with education authorities on how career information is provided for children and youth. Adults are also served at some 184 BFA local offices within reach of every German. Resembling the U.S. Department of Labor, the BFA is an independent, self-governing organization incorporated under public law. It has four major areas of responsibility: job counseling and placement, vocational counseling services, unemployment insurance benefits, and research.

The pivotal point for lifelong career development for German children and youth occurs at the fifth and sixth grade levels during a time some states call "orientation." While the name suggests students are somehow oriented to career interests according to their aptitudes and abilities at this early age, in actuality students merely continue studying the normal range of subjects any middle school youngster in the United States might pursue; however, class teachers and other teachers the students have are asked to judge each child's ability to learn and get along with each other—many of the same attributes, in fact, that future employers will seek. At the completion of *orienteering* at the rural school we visited, teachers recommend which kinds of upper-level secondary schools sixth-grade "graduates" should attend.

How German students are assessed (fifth and sixth grades):

At one rural school we visited, teachers assessed students' performance using this continuum:

Able to use materials independently
Sees things systematically and can explain
Finds solutions to problems
Needs help to solve problems
Speaks out and expresses self
Makes good comments during lessons
Takes active part in lessons
Quiet, but follows and watches; not actively participating
Wasn't taking part regularly
Works with great effort over time; concentrated; focused
Can't keep mind on task; easily distracted
Works slowly
Isn't careful, disorderly
Doesn't do homework regularly

Until 1978, an educator's recommendation was the final word; now, parents can overrule a teacher's judgment. This explains, in part, why some German officials are concerned about increasing enrollments in *gymnasia*; indeed, some staff believe that more and more students who are enrolled may never earn the coveted *abitur*, a prerequisite for technical and academic college and university education. In fact, students see very real advantages of working for the

abitur since it opens any door. Those who don't use this certificate for university admission will often actually "go back" and enter the dual system later, though now a few years older and "wiser" than their apprentice peers. Germany's lifelong approach to career development does accommodate adults who make mid-career change decisions.

We observed one example of a union-operated evening program for adults who have decided to spend three evenings a week studying to earn their *abitur* so they can then try to enroll in college or university programs at an older age.

Sweden. Sweden shares with its European neighbors a deep concern about the individual career growth and personal development of each citizen. Central to their system is a commitment to help youth at the upper secondary level make choices about the content of their own education and their future careers. After compulsory school, many options seem to be open, and if one institutional setting doesn't fit, others are available. At the upper secondary level, for instance, students and teachers jointly decide when various courses will be taken as well as means of evaluation that will be used. As Swedes grow older, they may still receive education and training services.

Authorities believe their decision to identify 16 career pathways will help Swedes adjust to changing labor market needs more quickly over a lifetime. Severe economic conditions always present challenges to these models, however. Talking with a group of young men just completing their compulsory military service, only one in the group of six had a solid fix on a family-wage job. In Sweden, we saw our only overt effort by business and industry to help youth become aware of an important career—in this case, the machining and manufacturing arena. Several large manufacturers in Gothenburg (e.g., Volvo and SKF) had joined forces to create a Technology Center for children to explore the world of technology; for teens, they developed a flashy CD-style campaign designed to entice youth to find out more about the metals industry.

Institutional Support Systems for Career Development

United States. Career guidance in the U.S. is not well supported by three major institutions whose stake in human resource development is large: (1) the business and labor community, (2) the independent/nonprofit sector, and (3) government at all levels. In most cases, there is widespread wringing of hands and lamentations about the poor job being done by counselors rather than concerted efforts to ensure that quality services are provided all along the age and outcome continuum. Business and labor representatives are usually willing to participate in career days and to provide informative materials about what their organization does or occupations within it. And, in too few cases, they will also open up their organizations for visits and internships.

Community-based organizations are sometimes at the forefront in delivering personal, educational, recreational, and social services to persons with special needs, but sometimes these concerns outweigh the career development needs of various target populations (e.g., Hispanics, rural farm workers, persons with disabilities). As government agencies like public

schools face shrinking resources, even counseling services to deal with serious behavior problems, drug use, and gang involvement are stretched to the limit.

The federal and state influence is minimal though some program development funding can be accessed under School-to-Work Transition and Carl Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education guidelines. At the local level, coordination among K-12, postsecondary, and various targeted programs (JTPA, vocational rehabilitation, farm workers, Native Americans, adjudicated youth, Job Corps) seldom occurs except for occasional "major events" like a citywide career exposition or job fair. Too few cities provide centralized coordination of employer resources. Within the same labor market area, job shadowing, paid and nonpaid work experiences, and hands-on learning opportunities for youth are solicited on behalf of high school vocational programs, JTPA youth summer employment programs, community and technical college cooperative education and internship programs, vocational rehabilitation providers, parole officers, special education programs, private vocational schools, senior worker programs, displaced worker programs, teen parent programs, and secondary schools looking for community service projects students can do. It's no wonder employers are confused and finally say "no thanks" to everyone, particularly since paperwork demand for each is different.

Another institutional support system available in Europe that makes a big difference in how easily persons can access education and training resources (including career information and guidance) is the excellent public transportation system. It is simply easier to get around! If a teacher at a *hauptschule* in Germany wants to take a group of students to visit the BIZ, it's not a problem; except in the largest U.S. cities, public buses and trains in most communities aren't the first choice for easy and efficient transportation; paperwork and budget hassles to reserve a school bus or van are sometimes even worse.

Denmark. From the federal level to the local, all social partners concerned with human resource development have clear roles to play in providing career guidance services. Federal coordination is limited to just that: convening the players, writing broad policies, publishing materials (when it makes sense for a common set of resources to be available in every community), and keeping the lines of communication open. Employer confederations and workers organizations are proactive in their efforts to build and maintain a quality workforce. Student unions, for example, help young adults prepare for first job placements by training youth in interview skills, preparing final resumes, and other employability skills. Municipal and county governments try to coordinate their career guidance services to eliminate duplication and overlap. In the Arhus region, for example, staff responsible for guidance services for in-school youth are housed in the same offices as staff who operate youth guidance programs for students who have left the traditional school for whatever reason. Staff training is provided on a joint basis, providing career counselors in all settings with opportunities to meet each other and hear the same messages.

Germany. Organizationally, the BFA has a central office located in Nuremberg, 11 regional offices, and 184 local labor offices with a total of nearly 700 branches. The BFA is managed by an administrative council and governed by a board of directors who establishes policy. Membership on the board of directors includes a balance of employer and employee

associations and state and local government personnel. The BFA is supported by mandatory taxes on employers and employees amounting to 6 percent of gross wages, half paid by the employer and half paid by the employee.

The vocational counseling service provides information to help young people ages 15 to 20 make their first career decisions. It is a voluntary service, which staff estimate is used by 80 percent of school leavers. The BFA develops career information, operates the BIZ (career) centers, provides vocational guidance in schools and labor offices, places citizens in vocational training, and promotes vocational training and international cooperation.

BIZ centers have close links and cooperate with employer associations, crafts and commerce organizations, chambers, craft unions, and government in the development of training placements for students. Despite the current economic recession, these partners generally appear to view providing training placements as an investment in the future and a social responsibility. This investment is particularly sensible, given the severe shortage of young people in the labor market currently. This demographic trend is likely to affect Germany throughout the 1990s.

Sweden. Municipal education authorities will definitely be in the driving seat in Sweden's new education and training system. Federal guidelines may specify broad expectations, but quality of services will be a local function. We saw dedicated leaders beginning to emerge in the Gothenburg area—a hopeful sign given the negative economic climate they must now work within. One of the more interesting phenomena is the role business and industry can play in the education and employment preparation process. SKF, the world's largest manufacturer of ball bearings with headquarters in Gothenburg, will be opening a full-fledged secondary school serving 60 students on its premises in fall 1994. This means if SKF chooses to contract with faculty at a nearby high school for certain instructional services, it may, or it can find another way to deliver the program. While it will continue to offer an unusual manufacturing-oriented program resembling the German dual-system model that has been popular for 55 years, it will now add a class in "sports/physical fitness/health" using the corporate exercise facilities and pool. The government foots the bill for all education and training services while SKF provides the facilities, equipment, and student wages (as applicable).

Ensuring Equity in Career Decision Making

United States. Significant strides have been made over the past 10 years to help ensure that all Americans have equal access to every career opportunity—and yet most observers agree we still have a long way to go. A number of demonstration programs and recruitment efforts have been mounted to ensure that any student regardless of gender, national origin, potential disability, language difference, economic circumstance, racial heritage, cultural experience, or behavioral difficulty will be able to consider, select, prepare for, enter, and receive fair treatment in a particular occupational choice that meets their goals, interests, and abilities. In recruitment materials and videos, for instance, extra efforts are made to picture and describe persons of every age and circumstance. Special programs have been created to help women develop the physical endurance to enter particularly strenuous occupations or to accelerate the

communication skills of recent immigrants, technological devices are provided to persons whose physical conditions would seemingly bar them from performing certain tasks, interpreters might be available for students who need instructions read or signed to them.

Despite these efforts and others, a review of vocational training programs in the United States typically finds that young women and men still tend to choose stereotypical occupations and that far too few students of color are represented across the occupational spectrum in proportion to their representation in the general population. To ensure that education agencies are meeting equity and Civil Rights requirements, federal vocational education dollars provide for an equity specialist in each state whose job is to encourage education and training providers to overcome both blatant and subtle barriers as they attract and prepare persons for jobs in the future. Teaching students to recognize and deal with equity issues in the workplace, such as sexual harassment, are beginning to be part of career development curricula.

Denmark. Career pathways for young women and minorities in Denmark seem to be limited. Disproportionate numbers of females are represented in traditional occupations such as cosmetology and daycare. Our observations in classrooms suggest that, as in the United States, students in Denmark still receive differential treatment based on ethnicity and gender. The need to build "equal worth" into guidance activities has been recognized across the nation. Equal opportunity legislation is designed to promote equity in the classroom by addressing teaching techniques, awareness of nontraditional career opportunities, and course selection. Each regional office now includes an equal worth specialist whose role is similar to the state-level specialists in the United States. Targeted efforts and resources have also been allocated to attract and nurture immigrant students whose numbers are rising across the country. Our team visited an inner city *folkeskole* in Copenhagen where native Danes are in the minority. Immigrants must meet the same entry standards for post-*folkeskole* programs which means that considerable time and effort are given to mastering the Danish language. Special production schools or "youth schools" and subsidized jobs help immigrants gain basic jobs skills. Despite these efforts, minority groups seem to be under-represented in family (living)-wage occupations.

Germany. Our team saw less formal evidence that equity is a major consideration in career guidance delivery in Germany if supportive legislation or staff responsibilities for this function are indicators. However, our review of materials at the BIZ indicates efforts are made to ensure that role models and examples are bias free. We were also impressed by efforts at Volkswagen (Braunschweig) where the goal is 20 percent female apprentices. As one Volkswagen official observed, "Women will not buy a product from businesses that do not employ women." Our interpreter, one of the union-sponsored counselors at the training center, was female. As we visited schools and colleges, however, the team observed few female role models at the *hauptschule* level on staff, in building art work, or on bulletin boards. However, enrollment in nontraditional programs seemed to be good. At the *realschule* level and in technical training programs, we observed that both female and male students participate in nontraditional areas and heard that female apprentices in nontraditional areas earn less and have less career advancement than their male peers.

Sweden. As part of the group guidance activities at the compulsory school, attention is devoted to how male and female roles can become stereotyped. In materials printed by Gothenburg-area manufacturers and designed to attract students into metals-related careers, women and men appear to be portrayed equally. In Sweden, we learned that 83 percent of Swedish women work outside the home and 84 percent of the men.

INFORMATION STRUCTURE FOR CAREER PLANNING

Young people make good career decisions only if they know how to find and use quality information. Some of this information is best delivered through personal experience, some through reading, some through touching and feeling, and some though listening and observing. Likewise, career development is a process that begins early and is continually refined as each milepost is reached.

Building Personal and Career Awareness

United States. Helping children, youth, and adults in the United States become aware of personal and career options is a hit and miss process. Thanks to a sincere initiative in the 1970s called "career education," many states and local school districts still emphasize career awareness activities as part of ongoing K-12 instruction. Some textbooks provide illustrations of how workers use academic skills, and new applied curricula are built around occupational themes.

State occupational information coordinating committees (SOICCs) bring key agencies in each state together to better use Department of Labor job trends data. Most states now operate computerized career information delivery systems supplemented by a variety of print materials for use in schools and colleges. Commercial vendors provide a variety of resources, and many private and for-profit agencies and organizations, ranging from the Girl Scouts to *United States Today*, from concrete and masonry workers to electronics associations, are working to help children, youth, and adults alike access print and video information on opportunities in various career fields.

One of the most interesting career awareness events of 1993 and 1994 happened on a nationwide basis and required little if any bureaucratic structure, elaborate materials or outside funding. Called "Take Your Daughter to Work Day," workers are encouraged to bring their own or an "adopted" daughter to their factories, offices, laboratories, and workshops for part or all of a school day. Thanks to widespread media coverage, this one day across the United States may have been the most systematic effort ever attempted on a national basis to help girls and young women see career possibilities. Other career awareness events are highly organized and designed to expose youth to a range of career possibilities. For example, several states operate "Business Weeks" in the summers to help a limited number of young people (with expenses covered by business donors) discover a range of potential occupations. For over 10 years, local communities across the nation have participated in the "Expanding Your Horizons" career conferences for girls and young women in middle school through high school. In this activity, adult female role models make short presentations about their occupations. Careers in science and mathematics are featured.

Several local communities have made conscious decisions to invest in well-equipped career information centers in local high schools and community colleges. In many cases, these are

staffed by certified specialists equipped with a variety of technologies who also spend time in high school classrooms to deliver career information and foster self-awareness in creative ways.

Attention to self-concept development is a much more subtle process in the United States, however, with teachers encouraged to foster individual student growth and development without straying into "values education." A number of proven programs—some backed by civic organizations and youth-serving associations—are aimed at helping children and youth develop resiliency rather than succumbing to negative behaviors (drugs, gangs, dropping out of school). Some U.S. high schools are experimenting with new organizational structures and scheduling patterns to ensure closer personal interactions between staff and students on a more sustained basis.

A few communities have established "mentor" programs with business and industry partners whereby employees in those organizations are encouraged to "adopt" a student through a carefully managed process for building student self-concepts and awareness of employability skills. U.S. schools' extracurricular offerings may provide the most wide-ranging opportunities for self-concept development and personal awareness as students participate in clubs, athletics, vocational youth organization, student council activities, music groups, service projects and the like. Concerns about the safety and well-being of children and youth are emerging issues that must be addressed in these programs, however.

Denmark. Denmark provides a basic occupational information delivery system, primarily built on print materials users can access on specific jobs and training opportunities available across the country. Policymakers hope to improve and expand this resource, eventually building a user-friendly computer-based system. In the meantime, a private vendor has also developed a computer-based system which is helping students consider career options in *folkeskoles* with the assistance of trained career counselors.

How Danish students are assessed (all grades):

13	Very good, an unusual individual achievement
11	Very good, an individual achievement
10	Very good, but somewhat routine, achievement
9	Good, above average
8	Average
7	All right, but below average
6	Below average, but somewhat satisfying
5	Insecure achievement, and not satisfying
3	Very insecure, not satisfying, "thin"
0	Not acceptable

It is at the *folkeskole* where Denmark focuses its resources on career awareness. Team members found time and again that Denmark's use of a class teacher who shepherds some 25 young people from the first to ninth levels in *folkeskole* is key to developing a young person's

associations and state and local government personnel. The BFA is supported by mandatory taxes on employers and employees amounting to 6 percent of gross wages, half paid by the employer and half paid by the employee.

The vocational counseling service provides information to help young people ages 15 to 20 make their first career decisions. It is a voluntary service, which staff estimate is used by 80 percent of school leavers. The BFA develops career information, operates the BIZ (career) centers, provides vocational guidance in schools and labor offices, places citizens in vocational training, and promotes vocational training and international cooperation.

BIZ centers have close links and cooperate with employer associations, crafts and commerce organizations, chambers, craft unions, and government in the development of training placements for students. Despite the current economic recession, these partners generally appear to view providing training placements as an investment in the future and a social responsibility. This investment is particularly sensible, given the severe shortage of young people in the labor market currently. This demographic trend is likely to affect Germany throughout the 1990s.

Sweden. Municipal education authorities will definitely be in the driving seat in Sweden's new education and training system. Federal guidelines may specify broad expectations, but quality of services will be a local function. We saw dedicated leaders beginning to emerge in the Gothenburg area—a hopeful sign given the negative economic climate they must now work within. One of the more interesting phenomena is the role business and industry can play in the education and employment preparation process. SKF, the world's largest manufacturer of ball bearings with headquarters in Gothenburg, will be opening a full-fledged secondary school serving 60 students on its premises in fall 1994. This means if SKF chooses to contract with faculty at a nearby high school for certain instructional services, it may, or it can find another way to deliver the program. While it will continue to offer an unusual manufacturing-oriented program resembling the German dual-system model that has been popular for 55 years, it will now add a class in "sports/physical fitness/health" using the corporate exercise facilities and pool. The government foots the bill for all education and training services while SKF provides the facilities, equipment, and student wages (as applicable).

Ensuring Equity in Career Decision Making

United States. Significant strides have been made over the past 10 years to help ensure that all Americans have equal access to every career opportunity—and yet most observers agree we still have a long way to go. A number of demonstration programs and recruitment efforts have been mounted to ensure that any student regardless of gender, national origin, potential disability, language difference, economic circumstance, racial heritage, cultural experience, or behavioral difficulty will be able to consider, select, prepare for, enter, and receive fair treatment in a particular occupational choice that meets their goals, interests, and abilities. In recruitment materials and videos, for instance, extra efforts are made to picture and describe persons of every age and circumstance. Special programs have been created to help women develop the physical endurance to enter particularly strenuous occupations or to accelerate the

college education. Each BIZ also has an "EC corner" which features news about careers and opportunities in other European countries now linked through the European Union.

Each BIZ also has a computerized career guidance tool called STEP-PLUS which helps prepare students for their conversations with the vocational guidance officers. STEP-PLUS is designed for students in lower and intermediate secondary schools. Self-assessed interests are compared with the requirements for about 250 occupations. Students often receive this package at school, fill out the survey, and return the form to Nuremberg for scoring in a "top secret"-looking, postage-paid reply envelope which features a seal that reinforces the "confidential," give-this-your-immediate-attention appeal. The student receives a personalized letter with results of the computer analysis and next steps on who they should call at the BIZ center (their school's counselor or officer).

Our visit to a typical BIZ center.....

Walking into what appears to be a modern business office setting, we found exhibits from area employers designed to inform clients about particular careers in their field. On this particular day, a recruiter for local police agencies is talking to a young man and woman. Another display is about occupations in environmental technology. Moving onward, users will find a spacious, brightly-colored, carpeted room with dozens of private viewing booths, carrels, low bookcases and tables for individual and group access to various resources. Computer stations are clustered in pods with one or two students at each of the brightly-animated screens that prompt them to answer questions and find out more details. This seems particularly attractive to a group of eight boys from a local alternative school for at-risk students who are accompanied by their teacher. Behind a counter a man checks out laser disks as students request information on various careers. At another bank of carrels students are wearing headsets and watching videos in color depicting people in various jobs. Print materials on several hundred occupations are contained in carousels and bookcases. A receptionist provides general information to users who arrive, and guides are available to help clients find and use the resources they need. A counselor is on duty in one corner to answer questions about training opportunities. Down the hall are many private offices for counselors, most of whom are out at any one time working with their assigned schools. The counselor's terminal, which can be swiveled so the user can see the screen, accesses a wide variety of information. One critical database contains employers willing to accept apprentices in the community where the student lives. A student inquires about baking apprentice slots, and the counselor prints all available openings within easy commuting distance, contact names, phone numbers, and characteristics of that site and occupation.

Clients, whether youth or adults, conduct independent career searches at the BIZ. Students from *hauptschules* and *realschules* come to the BIZ in class groups at about ages 14 to 15. *Gymnasium* students typically come on their own time. Whether coming individually or in groups, they first receive an orientation to the BIZ and how to use its resources.

Each vocational guidance officer is responsible for about five or six schools. They speak to classes on topics ranging from BIZ services to career decision making skills. The counselor may also help teach a "Labor Economics and Technology" curriculum in most schools during the last two years of *hauptschule* and *realschule*.

Sweden. The Swedish labor agency operates a network of career information and employment assistance centers linked electronically to share information on job availability. Print materials describing careers are also available in these centers and in schools as well. A microcomputer-based career information system was being used at a Youth Center we visited. The major users of the government-operated centers seem to be adults. The most aggressive approach to career awareness seems to be occurring at the compulsory school level and coordinated primarily by one staff person in the building wearing the hat of "career counselor." A part of the curriculum this counselor coordinates uses a 220-question career interest survey that came from the United States! We also met a science teacher in that school who is apparently one of a growing number of academic teachers trying to link subject matter with career applications. He described a science project where students were studying pollution issues and applying mathematics simultaneously. He tries to talk with students about career opportunities in his field.

Exploring Career Options

United States. Most U.S. students will receive only school-arranged exposure to the meaning of work during their elementary years. Teachers at these levels routinely assign students classroom jobs where they learn what it means to be responsible for carrying out certain tasks and work as a member of a team. Field trips to visit, for example, a firehouse, a museum, or a state capitol, are not uncommon. A money-raising effort, simulated classroom store, or an actual community recycling project might require students to "try on" various roles.

After the "grade school" years, few systematic opportunities for U.S. teenagers to visit workplaces are part of a planned educational program. Most youth first meet employer expectations face to face through part-time jobs after school and in the summer. A relatively small number will first encounter a work-based learning program in the senior year of a high school vocational program through a cooperative education agreement between the student, the school, and an employer. A few high schools will allow school credit for work experience during the actual school day, perhaps with a related class that helps students see the linkage between their part-time job and school subject matter as well as learn about various tools they will need to find and keep jobs in the future. Interestingly, it is students in alternative secondary programs who often receive the most enriching opportunities for work-based learning because their learning or performance in traditional programs failed to conform to accepted standards.

Some youth learn what it takes to meet adult standards by participating in art, music, athletics, and journalism programs, by helping operate a school store, or by entering a local, regional, or state vocational student competition. These hands-on activities help youth sort out what they like or don't like while there's still time to change a course of action. A growing number of schools now require community service projects as part of graduation expectations—again helping youth discover what adults do "out there" but very late in the formal school experience. To fill this void, many communities have created their own solutions: the Boy Scout exploration program, the Civil Air Patrol programs, candy stripers in local hospitals, volunteer fire departments, Junior Achievement programs, and Space Camp are a few of these

opportunities. Summer JTPA programs also offer exploration opportunities, often linked to activities that upgrade and maintain academic skills as well.

Now some industries are offering special programs to entice young people (particularly minorities) to try out fields of study or occupations where their participation is under-represented. Examples range from science and mathematics internships to teacher development programs which enable students to systematically consider career fields they might never have seriously considered and which require early and sustained academic efforts for achievement.

Emerging Tech Prep programs are experimenting with internships for students (e.g., The Boeing Company's four-week summer orientation to manufacturing processes and specialties with two subsequent summers of in-depth internships).

Denmark. All Danish youth have the opportunity to spend concentrated time in self-selected workplaces as early as the seventh level in *folkeskole* or at approximately age 14. The grade 7 *practik* is optional, and students must make their own arrangements with willing employers. Required *practiks* begin at the eighth level. To accomplish this task in Arhus, Denmark's second largest city, a staff of three persons coordinate citywide arrangements working with teacher/counselors in each *folkeskole*. These week-long visits are thus spread across the school year so that employers are not excessively burdened with young people at certain times.

Employer participation is apparently quite widespread since *practiks* require little more than willing adults available to show one or more young people what happens in their workplace and present each student with a spectrum of career possibilities. Grade nine visits follow the same format as level eight experiences: students make lists of their three top "wishes," and staff try to arrange either choice one or two. In theory, the class teachers and the career counselors both spend time with students at the employer sites to ensure that their experiences are meaningful, though we discovered that this may not always occur.

After the grade eight and nine *practiks*, a debriefing and synthesizing activity takes place at the school in which students share what they did and what they learned with each other. Optional Year 10 students often participate in additional *practiks* (perhaps with a learning project in hand) since this school year is designed to be a "growing and broadening" year for students who need more time before going to advanced secondary or specific vocational-technical programs.

Germany. As in Denmark, students in Germany have opportunities to explore occupations first-hand. In Germany, making arrangements for *practiks* is handled by school staff (teachers with release time) and visits tend to be longer at the upper grades (up to three weeks for *gymnasium* students). When students begin programs of study (such as the nursing program at the Braunschweig hospital), the first weeks are designed as an exploratory overview of the field of study, thus giving time for students to opt out.

Sweden. As in Denmark and Germany, Sweden uses a *practik* model highly dependent on the enthusiasm of a career counselor assigned to each school. At the school we visited, the counselor described a systematic process that has produced high payoff. Soon after school starts in the fall, eighth graders begin to discuss the meaning of the "prao-placement" (the *practik*), a two-week exposure to the world of work and what the students' responsibilities will be. The counselor and class teachers arrange the placements with willing mentors at each site. There is considerable structure built into the learning experience. During the fifth and sixth weeks of school, all students are out on placements.

On their return, a three-week series of group guidance activities begins. The counselor takes half the students at a time through a variety of self-evaluation activities, tests, and the evaluations by mentors from the *practiks*. After group guidance activities are completed, each student has a one-on-one 15-minute discussion with the career counselor before filling out their plans for further study.

Given the wide variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds of students at this school, staff must be sensitive to various cultural values that must be honored when arranging *practiks*. For example, Turkish girls are not allowed to meet men during certain periods, a tradition that must be considered when arranging *practiks* in the community. Ninth graders can apparently go on *practiks* related to their choice of upper secondary program if they choose.

> "My practice was a sports shop where they design and make sports wear. I did some copying. It was very boring. I hoped that in ninth grade that it would be more exciting....(I went) for one week all day long." —Morgen
>
> "I was at an architect's office. I tried to draw some houses. I went to some places where they build houses. I tried to study some of the drawings and figure out what is what. I went around with different people while I was there and saw what they were doing. I chose this myself. I really didn't know where I wanted to go so I wrote this architect I knew who had his own firm and I was able to go there for my *practik*. I think it was very exciting. I think I want to be an architect after my graduation." —Peter

Career Information Support Systems

United States. Career information systems in the United States are of two sorts: data for program planning and data for career awareness and decision making. Both sets of workforce supply and demand data have their roots in the extensive labor market research process conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor using survey results supplied by each state's labor market information office. While these massive banks of information are vital, they are admittedly insufficient for career guidance both over the short and long term. It is nearly impossible to keep track of employers' rapidly changing job demands let alone the continuous restructuring and revision in existing occupations. Separate computer-based systems in each state are maintained by the Employment Service aimed primarily at matching adults with available jobs.

As noted earlier, state career information delivery systems transform these data into tools that students and staff in school, college and sundry training programs can use. A growing number of states publish an annual careers tabloid, for example, "newsletters" provided to all high school students and their families highlighting occupational trends and preparation opportunities. But that's not all: commercial and nonprofit publishers and providers have devised additional print and computer-based materials that help users sort out career options and match their interests with potential education and training programs. Other systems are standing by to help students and parents locate college financial aid sources.

Denmark. Information on career trends and occupational demand is gathered centrally in Copenhagen and translated into print and computer-based systems, both centrally developed and privately produced. General information to students on how to prepare for their next level of education and training is also published nationally. Each county is also free to develop additional support information and materials. In the Arhus area, for example, officials chose to create a consolidated handbook on schools, colleges, and universities for their particular region of South Jutland to serve as a quick reference for students, parents, and staff alike.

Germany. The Research Institute of the BFA develops basic labor market, occupational, and educational statistics which are then routed to the vocational guidance department for formatting, publication, and distribution. These statistics are transformed into occupational and educational information by a working group made up of vocational guidance officers and other BFA experts. Actual production is contracted to an outside publisher.

The BFA produces a wide variety of publications for staff, students, school leavers, employers, and the general public, which are offered free of charge. It is also involved in the production of audiotapes, computer software, and video discs which may include full motion videos and stills.

Weekly monographs describe work-related issues such as technological change, occupational requirements, etc. for BFA vocational guidance officers. Reference materials are produced including "Institutions for Vocational Training," which has become a "mother database" of gigantic proportions. Over 100,000 changes are made to this database each year! Other smaller publications are derived from this database. "Educational Training and Occupations" focuses on the availability of further training both by field nationally and by geographic area across fields.

The *Basic Reference Manual on Occupational and Vocational Information* describes all occupations in great detail based on ongoing task analyses. (The volumes were too numerous to fit into normal office spaces, so they were redone in small print on thin paper! The BFA is in the process of computerizing this database.) Work descriptions are gathered from businesses by vocational guidance officers, placement officers, and individuals hired by the publishing house using a set of standardized forms. Publishers also screen the newspaper want ads daily to gather data on industry needs and expectations.

Certification and Professionalism: Transferability of skills in Germany's highly structured occupational preparation and certification process seems to be difficult. A sales person in a meat market may not be able to automatically find a job as a sales person in a shoe store. Training in selling shoes, for example, is a two- to three-year program emphasizing such topics as physiology, shoe materials and construction, dyes and colors, shoe care and maintenance as well as the usual skills of customer service and business operations, learned both at a *berufschule* (a nearby skills center) as well as on the job as an apprentice. The same detail would be expected for persons who are clerks in a meat market or confectionery store.

That same attention to perfection in a respected occupation was found in Denmark. We visited a technical school program training young men and women to be house painters. The curriculum and facilities resembled an art school more than a technical school. Displays contained dozens of different brushes, for example, with careful attention to bristles and cuts. Color analysis seemed to be an important part of the learning program as did the chemistry of paint formulas. Elaborate laboratories contained mockups of various rooms in a house with different wall and ceiling textures and coatings, many with creative landscapes or finishes. Some looked exactly like marble, for example, but were created by hand. Another laboratory featured 20 identical small rooms with each student decorating a room according to client specifications. None on the study team had seen a similar vocational program in the United States.

Occupations are coded using a common system in all publications. The coding system, which began in the 1930s, appears to be a conceptual combination of the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) and the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT), excluding the data-people-things descriptions. This classification system suffers from the same limitations as the DOT. It does not easily add new occupations and has some outdated information. The ongoing process of updating work descriptions helps to address this issue in Germany.

All *hauptschule* and *realschule* students receive a publication at school which provides general vocational information about occupations and training opportunities available through the dual system. All *gymnasium* students receive a similar publication which describes educational programs and opportunities. Both publications are updated annually.

Special magazine format publications (similar to U.S. career tabloids) target *hauptschule* students, *abitur* completers and university graduates. These may be published monthly or quarterly. Similar booklets such as "Your Career Advancement" are prepared for current workers on broad occupational categories. Publications are free of charge from the BIZ centers and are available in school libraries.

KURS is a data processing program which makes information on job-related matters and training available to the employment offices. It is the largest database in Europe for vocational and further training. Vocational guidance officers access KURS on behalf of their clients. KURS can be made available to companies, chambers, and universities. It can do a search for suitable courses in accordance with client goals. At present KURS contains about 14,000 training programs, 160,000 training apprentice sites, and 360,000 individual courses that are offered at 25,000 training organizations.

Sweden. Sweden's career information system relies on print and computer-based delivery. Racks of flyers on various careers were observed at one Youth Center and students and counselors can also sit down to use a computerized interactive program as well. Visits to centrally located public employment service offices can also be arranged; however, the only new information there would be on job openings. A national career tabloid newspaper is also published periodically with articles about careers, programs, and schools.

TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO WORK

The process of helping youth and young adults narrow their options and embark on a sequence of coursework and experiences leading to occupational certification is seldom linear. Time and money can be saved when we make good decisions and seek out the right counsel along the way.

Making Career Decisions

United States. Factors youth tend to give priority when making career choices would probably emphasize income, security, and prestige. Helping students decide which career fields or specific jobs they might want to pursue is left largely to chance in most U.S. schools. Indeed, it would be rare for a student to be asked "What do you plan to do with your life?" The exception is students interested in baccalaureate degree programs because high school counseling staff must ensure the right kinds of courses and paperwork are processed in time for graduation. A student interested in electronics would seldom receive the same attention or informed recommendations.

Few comprehensive high schools have career guidance specialists delegated to work with all students on occupational interests and plans. One effort to address the needs of all students is often a "career day" which encourages students to hear experts from the community in a variety of fields. Larger cities may have "college fairs" during which hundreds of colleges, universities, military recruiters, and trade schools set up displays and booths aimed primarily at high school seniors. Most high schools do provide various career interest inventories and aptitude assessments even though some are only administered toward the end of the high school experience, too late for long-term planning.

Only one career aptitude assessment test—the ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery)—is consistently available nationwide at no cost. Local high schools determine if and how this assessment tool will be used and also whether military recruiters will be allowed to contact students later on. Most state-operated career information delivery systems include several other resources to aid student career planning. Often students begin with a questionnaire asking a variety of questions about student preferences for kinds of work and then use a computerized program to select several occupations that meet a particular profile.

A growing number of school districts are creating career development portfolios that encourage students to maintain a year-by-year record of their school performance, interests, work experiences, long-range goals, and letters of recommendation. High schools with active career centers will often schedule a series of activities which help students focus on what will happen after high school. Some U.S. high schools are beginning to reorganize their secondary curriculum along career pathway themes. These systems encourage youth to begin making tentative choices, though flexibility is built in for changing pathways along the way.

Denmark. Personal responsibility is emphasized in the Danish approach to career decision making. Denmark provides a wide range of career preparation options for youth. Each of a possible 85 occupations are clearly defined in all government publications. Because all education and training is free, cost to a student's family is eliminated. The only requirement is that the student has met all prerequisites for success in completing the program—a factor that does work against immigrants who have not mastered the Danish language.

Testing plays almost no role in guidance in Denmark. This is a reflection of the Danes' skepticism of the validity of tests as well as their approach to guidance. Tests, especially aptitude tests, are criticized on the grounds that they favor the gifted and that they tend to narrow rather than expand thinking about career alternatives.

Folkeskole students receive a career planning folder that asks a series of questions similar to those used by computer-based "quests" in the United States. The ninth level "career days" (guidance workshops) give these school leavers one final dose of career planning assistance. Class teachers and counselors use games, videos, and individual counseling to cap three years of career-related activities. During the ninth year, students also have opportunities to spend a day at technical schools, commercial schools, and a local *gymnasium* (upper secondary school). Those same schools also send counselors from their staff to local *folkeskole*s to provide information to students and parents or guardians about each institution. We heard, however, that efforts to achieve "parity" in presentations across these schools works to the disadvantage of vocationally oriented schools. They and the commercial schools must try to explain dozens of occupational choices while *gymnasia* offer only two pathways leading to university acceptance: a language line and a mathematics line.

Henrick is studying economics at the University of Arhus. He decided on this course of study from the information he got from the counselor at the *gymnasium*. Before *gymnasium* he went to a private *folkeskole*. At the time he wanted to be a lawyer but knew that a *practik* in law would not be good, so he cooked for a week and enjoyed the experience. While in the ninth grade he "got more out of visiting the *gymnasium* and business schools and having their counselors come to the *folkeskole* than out of any written materials or assignments." He added, "Adults and others I talked to also helped a lot." Henrick took the optional 10th form to improve his grades and decide what to do. "Most students," he related, "don't go to university right after *gymnasium*." Henrick also sees poor job prospects when he finishes his studies but added that most students don't choose their area of study for the jobs they can get but rather because of their interests.

Students we interviewed who are well along the way with university preparation and who know their chances for employment in a particular field are bleak would not change the occupational decision they made. They know they are being broadly prepared for a field that will in any case change greatly by the time they are in the job market.

Perhaps another reason for students' lack of concern about what will happen if employment is not available in their particular field is the safety net (social support) available both during their five-year university program and during their unemployment should it occur.

Germany. If a strong correlation exists between early school success and eventual success in the world of work, then Germany definitely puts a lot of faith in the predictive ability of early school performance. Even though it's possible to take alternative paths and still achieve one's dreams, in Germany which secondary school a student enters certainly affects her or his destiny. Team members agree they would not want their own children to be assigned to a *hauptschule* if other choices were at hand. It seemed to us that less is expected from students in these schools and that most will attain relatively dead-end jobs. Indeed, occupational interest tests to help youth sort out alternative career options are different for *hauptschule* students (noncollege-bound) as opposed to students aspiring to attend college or university.

Career decision making in Germany seems to be left primarily to students and parents or guardians unless either or both seek out the help of a BIZ vocational counselor. In Germany, tests are used in counseling students. Aptitude tests are considered good indicators of students' abilities to handle the theoretical component of the education and training needed for passing the required certification exams for every occupation. Every youth and adult has access to such resources as the Psychological Service with 400 psychologists who see over 200,000 clients annually and offer counseling and testing services. Students also receive information on the kinds of testing employers use and how to prepare for them. A standardized test titled "Choice of Occupation" is used to evaluate aptitudes. The Psychological Service also prepares specialized tests for certain populations.

Sweden. It is Sweden's goal that every school will be able to offer nearly identical programs, though staff admit it will be impossible for rural areas to provide the full range of choices. Students, parents or guardians, and school personnel will soon have information that describes the opportunities in each of 16 pathways.

Moving Along a Career Pathway

United States. One of the most often cited statistics about apprentices is that their average age is approximately 29 while the average in Europe is supposedly 19. While these data may rightly be questioned, the basic message holds true: many U.S. youth will wait until their mid or late 20s before finally "getting serious" about their career field of choice and how they will master the particular skills needed to succeed in an occupational specialty within a broad employment sector. The average age of community and technical colleges and four-year university students is rising.

More and more, young adults are working in "dead-end" and temporary jobs during the prime time in their lives when they are most receptive to learning and have fewer roadblocks to overcome. Adulthood typically brings family responsibilities, home ownership, and increasing debt—factors that mitigate against steady preparation for entry into a career and continuous updating thereafter. For these younger adults, no easily-found career guidance services are available.

National Programs in Sweden

All local education agencies in both urban and rural areas are encouraged to offer 16 programs of study. Certain core subjects are common to all programs since Swedes believe students must be prepared for continued education and the world of work. These common courses include Swedish, English, civics, religious studies, mathematics, nature studies, sports and health, and aesthetics. The 16 programs are:

1. *Childcare and leisure* (careers in childcare, leisure activities, healthcare, sports, and libraries)
2. *Construction* (home-building industry, painting, civil engineering, and heavy construction)
3. *Electricity* (installation, repair, and maintenance of electrical, telephone, and electronic installations)
4. *Energy* (careers in electrical power industry, heating, ventilation, sanitation installations, and marine technology)
5. *Aesthetic* (art and design, music, dance, and theater)
6. *Transportation* (repair and maintenance of vehicles ranging from cars to airplanes)
7. *Trade and administration* (commerce and business practices in the private and public sectors)
8. *Handicrafts* (handicraft trades, mostly taught in workplaces)
9. *Hotel and restaurant trades* (hospitality and tourism careers, including food service)
10. *Industry* (production processes, manufacturing, textiles, joinery, and robotics)
11. *Foodstuffs* (processing and retail sales in baking and confectionery, and meat and provisions)
12. *Media* (information and advertising, commercial art, and printing)
13. *Land and animal husbandry* (agriculture, silvaculture, horticulture, and animal care)
14. *Natural sciences* (preparation for further studies in mathematics, and science and technology)
15. *Health care* (health care, welfare, and dentistry)
16. *Social sciences* (preparation for further studies in social sciences, economics, and languages)

There are always exceptions: students who have had their eyes set on a goal for a long time because of personal commitment ("I knew I wanted to be a carpenter/doctor/musician when I was in the seventh grade."); or family support and connections ("My mom is a bookkeeper and I want to go into accounting."); or students who make early commitments to join the military (through the Delayed Entry Program, for example). In those cases, clear pathways are defined and support systems are in place.

For many who pursue postsecondary education and training programs, another harsh reality sets in: they cannot meet the prerequisite skill levels in mathematics, science, and communication which today's sophisticated postsecondary programs require. Most two- and four-year colleges today must offer dozens of remedial classes to bring incoming students up to speed.

A U.S. version of Europe's "seamless" training programs is Tech Prep, now being implemented in every state. This is a first effort to deliberately link secondary and postsecondary curricula so students will see where new kinds of academic, vocational, and work-based learning can lead them. Thousands of high school graduates enter college and university programs every year. Tech Prep will gain momentum as costs increase and holders of bachelor degrees enter jobs that don't recognize or use their skills and many return to community and technical colleges or private vocational schools to acquire specific job skills

they could have received years earlier. Several states and local districts now enable students to begin scheduling essential academic, vocational, and work-based learning during the last four years of high school. These students will be able to enroll in advanced-skill courses to complete their two-year associate degree requirements without delay.

Denmark. Concern for individual achievement along the career pathway is manifest in various ways. The all-important exams both at the *folkeskole* and *gymnasium* require both written and oral assessments. To guarantee that faculty whim does not influence student grades, a student advocate/proctor sits in to monitor the process and negotiate the marks awarded if necessary. They enjoy careful and coherent coordination of school exit criteria at the national level; plenty of "extended time" opportunities for additional study and reflection (optional 10th year, continued preparation for entering a university, study years abroad); and the monetary safety net that encourages youth and young adults to keep on learning and serving others even if unemployed. It is no wonder that Danes have a more relaxed attitude about their career futures.

At the same time, there are measures to restrict "professional students" who never quite seem to finish their preparation program. Student stipends cease within a specified period that always seem to include a one-year "grace" period. Career preparation programs are also adjusted to reflect changes occurring in the economy at large. At the time of our visit, severe unemployment was affecting the availability of apprentice contracts with employers, the lifeblood of Denmark's highly-acclaimed "sandwich system." To provide a second-best replacement that honors their commitment to students, technical and commercial colleges are creating their own enterprises to simulate realistic, hands-on experiences for learners, often in a different location to underline the separation between theory and practice in students' minds.

Once Danes have embarked on a particular career journey, they have free choice of which schools or colleges they may wish to attend if that program is available only at certain institutions. One technical college we visited offered the country's only training program for refrigeration technicians. Since the college is located in a rural area, boarding facilities are provided with maid service for student rooms. The college offers beginning technical training in several fields for 15 to 16 year-olds just out of *folkeskole* as well as advanced updating skills for experienced workers returning for short courses. Popular, high enrollment programs are offered in various locations around the nation, but students may still choose to move to a different city. However, their monthly stipend must cover books, clothes, transportation and whatever housing arrangements they choose in those larger communities. Most students choose to live at home because of the high cost of living on one's own.

Germany. Student performance at levels five and six determine each German child's destiny, or at least how long each will have to spend later on in life backtracking to obtain their all-important certificate needed for job entry if they are placed into the "wrong" school at this important juncture. As Americans looking at this process with a comparative eye, the story is familiar. German youth follow a standard curriculum until the end of level six when parents or guardians must decide whether their child will enroll: in a *hauptschule*, which seems to demand the least rigor but includes some basic vocational skills; or a *realschule*, which asks more and offers more options as well; or the *gymnasium*, where high expectations and rigorous

performance are the norm. Students who choose the *gymnasium* can opt-out along the way, but if they persist until level 13 and pass the *abitur* exams, entrance to a college or university baccalaureate program will then be constrained by such realities as this: last year, only 18 percent of those with *abiturs* were able to gain university admission.

Sweden. Swedish students are making direct links between their compulsory school experience (including the *practik*) and the 16 possibilities that are theoretically available at the upper secondary level. Parent involvement in this process seems to be greater than we find in the United States. When open houses are held to inform students and parents about upper secondary programs, a high percentage of parents typically show up. Students from those upper secondary programs are often the ones carrying the message. As ninth graders begin their formal planning for upper secondary programs, parents and students meet during the evening with the counselor and staff to firm up next steps. The youth employment rate (for ages 18 to 24) in Gothenburg was 16 percent at the time of our visit. The local employment office coordinates placement of this population into jobs (*practiks*) to allow them to receive additional career guidance and exposure while also doing some productive work. A learning program agreement signed by an employer, the employment service, and a student is required. About 20 percent of *practik* students find permanent work, with employers mostly in smaller communities. If a firm does not employ a trainee, it must wait four months before it can accept another trainee.

Human Support Systems for Career Development

United States. Rather than increasing in numbers, the position in local schools called "career guidance counselor" is gradually joining the list of endangered species, and some might argue that fact is not such a bad thing after all. There was a time when many high schools designated one certified educator to provide vocational counseling. But too often these persons are the least effective communicators; most have little experience in work settings other than schools.

Thanks to concerns about helping *all* school counselors balance their concerns for guiding youth into higher education (particularly four-year bachelor degree programs) with the realistic employment opportunities all young people will eventually have, some local communities are making concerted efforts to give counselors an "inside look" at what's happening in the world of work today.

Many persons believe equipping parents or guardians for their significant role in career guidance should be an additional strategy, but resources for this process are few in number. What seems more promising in some schools is using paraprofessionals to operate career information centers and assigning "transition specialists" to career pathways in each building. Empowering teachers to provide career information as part of ongoing instruction is being facilitated when they receive internship opportunities with local employers and actually see how their subject matter is used.

Linking volunteer mentors from the community with at-risk youth has been used effectively not only for affirming self-concept but also for exposing young people to possible career choices. Using "peers" from postsecondary institutions or recent graduates of high schools who return to their alma mater with promising career plans to share has also shown promising results.

Training for career guidance workers is becoming more difficult to find across the country. Part of the slack is being met by professional organizations like the National Career Development Association.

Denmark. Our team was impressed with the ways Denmark combines the functions of career counseling with teaching in all school and college settings. While officials recognize having full-time persons in career counseling roles is best, resources and expertise are not always available to reach that goal. Larger institutions such as the Arhus Technical College have an impressive team of career counselors (this college has 22). One or more counselors work in each occupational training area and also serve as liaisons between student apprentices and their employers. At the university level we encountered the use of students as counselors because officials believe some of the most effective guidance can occur between peers.

Another essential partner in the Danish approach to career guidance is the parent or guardian. There seems to be an understanding that parents will participate in the education and career planning process, and there are high turnouts for parent/child meetings and open houses. A difficulty being faced in Denmark and Sweden is the need to keep parents or guardians informed of the reforms being made in the education and training systems. Parents are much more familiar with the old ways of doing things and still try to guide their children along those paths. Similarly, parents naturally tend to steer their children to the same kinds of institutions they themselves attended.

Germany. As noted earlier, parents or guardians play an important role in helping students make critical early decisions and to make their voices heard when teacher recommendations don't match family aspirations. While schools in Germany don't provide career counseling as a staff function, we found evidence that career development support exists in other ways. For example, at the Volkswagen apprenticeship training center we found union staff who are assigned to the program to help apprentices deal with a variety of personal and career issues.

Placing the professional career guidance function under auspices of a noneducation entity with most services delivered on a voluntary basis means that all youth and adults have equal opportunities to services no matter where they live in Germany. From conversations with staff in a *gymnasium*, however, how well counselors can move into site-based decision making structures in each school determines how much access they will have to students. We heard of a counselor coming to one school and few students ever going to see him.

Several training options are in place for those wishing to become vocational guidance officers or counselors. Those who counsel *gymnasium* students are required to complete a university degree. Most counselors have vocational training and work experience, but do not have university degrees. The BFA operates a *fachhochschule* in southern Germany to prepare

them to be counselors. Some counselors receive special training to work with the placement of the disabled in jobs, sheltered workshops, or public training facilities. Others have special training to work with "at-risk" young people in cooperation with social workers and tutors.

> "When we were young, church and school were more important in society. Now more parents emphasize money and children are nothing. It is important parents realize they have an important part in the development of children. It's not just up to the school."
>
> —German *grundschule* teacher

Sweden. A career counselor is key at the compulsory school level for addressing systematic career awareness, exploration, and planning. Our team was not assured that every school has such a person or if those services extend to the upper secondary levels as well. We did not have time to explore what happens at the lower grades, either. What did impress us is the kind of support available to students who *don't* succeed in mainstream educational programs. We visited two different Youth Centers and saw there some of the same practices used in U.S. alternative or continuing high school programs: considerable individual attention from trained counselors; tutoring and small classes with empathetic teachers; entrepreneurial projects to allow "at risk" youth to explore adult roles; and a safe haven if things aren't going right at a job site or at home.

We were impressed by a regulation that requires the school counselors to meet with union representatives and others in the employment system to keep abreast of what's happening in the work world. We also heard about the important role adult mentors play in the community as they help socialize youth on *practiks* and temporary (six-month) jobs where they learn what employment is all about.

APPENDIX

Glossary of Terms

New terms and concepts are typical on any visit to another country. A brief glossary of key education and training terms encountered by study team members to Denmark, Germany, and Sweden follows:

Apprenticeship. In all three countries, youth can begin practical, work-based learning as early as 15 years of age. In each country, how related education and training is provided varies.

Abitur. The certificate awarded after passing a series of tests when completing studies at a German *gymnasium* or its equivalent; university admission requires the *abitur*.

Berufschule. In Germany, a school or skills center where students learn both academic and vocational-technical skills.

Career information delivery system. A system for using computers to deliver career information to youth and adults, often including a personal interest survey that matches students with occupations of potential interest as well as available training opportunities; in Germany, names of employers in that community willing to have student apprentices are also provided.

Class teacher. In Denmark and Germany, efforts are made for teachers to begin working with a group of youngsters in first grade and stay with that group for the duration of the students' time in that school, thus encouraging close, personal interaction.

College. In Denmark, a college can sometimes mean technical or business schools where students begin their specialized training about age 15 after leaving *folkeskole*; in Germany, the term college is not used—but if it were, the focus would be on applied rather than theoretical studies.

Community career information center. An easily accessed central location where youth and adults alike can find out about available jobs as well as receive career planning assistance, testing, classes in employability skills, and other resources. In Germany, this is known as the BIZ.

Dual system. Germany's well-known system for preparing almost half of all young persons for vocational-technical fields starting as early as age 15; students spend three or four days a week in a workplace and the other one or two in a *berufschule* learning related academic and vocational-technical skills.

Fachhochschule. A college that prepares students in applied fields in contrast to more research or theoretical preparation (more extensive preparation than our associate degree).

Folkeskole. Denmark's grade school attended through level nine (about age 15).

Grade or elementary school. In Germany, the *grundschule/orienteering* years; in Denmark, the *folkeskole* years; and in Sweden the compulsory school years. In Germany, *orienteering* is roughly equivalent to middle school (grade five and six). Students begin their secondary education experience at grade seven which will lead them in a number of possible directions; in Denmark and Sweden, students are more or less kept together until grade nine.

Grundschule. Approximately grades one through four in typical German communities, sometimes including grades five and six (*orienteering*).

Gymnasium. In Denmark and Germany, this is sometimes called the "high school"; designed for students ranging from grades seven through thirteen (depending on the country) who are university material; in our team's view, competencies learned by students who complete the full *gymnasium* program are comparable to associate of arts or science degree holders—a transfer degree to most colleges and universities in our system. The main difference is that *gymnasium* graduates will have had two or three foreign languages and intensive math/science work. In Denmark and Germany, *gymnasium* students choose one of two "lines" or majors: *language* or *math*, roughly equivalent to receiving broad preparation for eventual careers in the humanities/social sciences or math/science/technology fields. *Gymnasium* classes are arranged more or less like a college schedule, even including Saturdays in some cases. Rigorous expectations prevail. Sweden has three "tracks" (programs) for university-bound students: aesthetics, social sciences, and natural sciences which are not offered in separate schools.

Hauptschule. Approximately grades seven through ten, roughly equivalent to the "general education track" in the U.S.

Level or form. In the U.S. we would call this the grade level (e.g., K-12); in this report, our preferred term is "grade."

Line. Major field of study in a *gymnasium*; students will be in the "math line" or "language line" which determines the depth in which they take classes in those pathways.

Practik. Spelled variously in different countries, but referring to a minimum of five-day exploratory experiences at workplaces arranged either by students themselves or adult staff responsible for setting up practical exposures to what work is all about; emphasis may not be as much on career "fit" but adult expectations and employability skills.

Realschule. A grades seven through ten secondary school program in Germany that resembles U.S. comprehensive high schools with a Tech Prep emphasis; most students are preparing for the dual system.

Sandwich program. Denmark's approach to vocational-technical preparation interlacing work-based learning and classroom/laboratory instruction in approximately 20-week blocks; students can begin this pattern as early as age 15.

Secondary schools. In Germany, the *hauptschule/realschule/gymnasium*/dual system; in Denmark, students choose between the sandwich program or *gymnasium*; in Sweden, the upper secondary schools resemble U.S. comprehensive high schools, but there are Youth Centers (alternative schools) and schools operated by industry as additional options.

Teacher-counselor. While Denmark and Sweden have full-fledged career counselors in larger pre-university institutions, most rely on teachers who have release time for one or more periods to handle the career guidance function. They receive special training for this role.

Teacher-principal. At least in the *gymnasia* in Denmark and Germany, the principals are also part-time teachers.

Study Team Members

The Career Guidance Team was headed by ***Dr. Larry McClure***, Director of NWREL's Education and Work Program. The Laboratory is a regional and national leader in school-to-work transition programs. NWREL was a developer of Experience-Based Career Education (EBCE) in the 1970s, still used around the nation as an effective strategy for work-based learning. EBCE places students into workplaces for academic as well as occupational learning activities. Dr. McClure is noted for his career development and experiential learning research and development materials. Other members of the European study team included:

Ms. Harriet Van Deursen, state specialist for educational equity for the Washington Office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction, who is also president of the National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity. Ms. Van Deursen focused her examination on how European systems ensure all students have equal access to quality programs no matter their potential barriers (such as sex, national origin, race, economic condition, physical/mental condition).

Dr. Carver Gayton, director of college and university relations for The Boeing Company, who spearheaded a unique student internship program that begins by placing high school-aged young people in company learning environments for three successive summers and leads to a Tech Prep associate degree in manufacturing technology. Dr. Gayton is a proponent of Tech Prep programs nationally and is chair of business/industry affiliates for the National Tech Prep Network. During the study tour, he looked particularly at the role business, industry, and labor play in career guidance delivery.

Ms. Nancy Hargis, Tech Prep coordinator for the state of Oregon and past secretary of the National Association of State Occupational Information Coordinating Committees, has a distinguished record of leadership in career development and occupational information issues. She is instrumental in Oregon school reform efforts which model the *America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages* recommendations. Ms. Hargis was particularly interested in how European approaches to career development fit with ongoing state school reform efforts in the United States.

Dr. Thomas Hamilton, coordinator of a unique health occupations program for youth in Klamath Falls, Oregon, is a former dentist now educator who is demonstrating that small rural communities can arrange for high school students to learn about potential occupations through hands-on experience in the workplace. As a parent of two adolescents as well as a teacher and former employer, Dr. Hamilton provided a unique "grassroots" view. He is a member of a task force developing secondary education guidelines for health and human services career pathways in Oregon schools. During the study tour, Dr. Hamilton was particularly interested in how rural America might adapt strategies from similar settings in Europe.

Dr. Lila Norris, a guidance and research specialist at the Education Testing Service (ETS) in Princeton, New Jersey, is particularly interested in computer-based guidance information delivery systems and is now in charge of a national ETS project to develop assessment materials aimed at noncollege-bound youth.

Mr. Estevan Rodriguez, senior project manager at Jobs for the Future, a national advocacy organization helping shape U.S. school-to-work transition models, including so-called "youth apprenticeships," has an extensive background in U.S. training programs for youth and services for minority populations in particular. His broad experience in working with inner city youth and bilingual programs provided a valuable background for his present responsibilities assisting model youth apprenticeship programs around the nation.

Study Tour Itinerary

Before the five study teams embarked on their visits to Europe, the 40 members gathered at the University of Maryland in late August 1993 for an orientation and briefing on education and training systems in Europe. Each team then developed its own set of study questions and a site visit itinerary. Team leaders were encouraged to make a pre-visit tour to Europe to make arrangements for site visits. After the full study tours were completed, each on a different timetable, the teams convened in January to share findings and recommendations.

During the November 1993 study tour in Europe, the career guidance team visited dozens of government agencies, schools, colleges, and community career information centers. In addition to students, teachers, counselors, and administrators in schools and colleges, team members also interviewed parents, employers, mentors of apprentices, and union representatives. A separate publication contains profiles describing team members' impressions of each site.

The study team itinerary was built in such a way that we could learn not only about the policy frameworks and institutional systems that guide the delivery of career guidance to youth in Denmark, Germany, and Sweden but also about the grassroots impact of those services. We decided it would be important to meet students, workers, parents, teachers, and administrators where career guidance services most likely occur—in homes, classrooms, and workplaces. Therefore, our team looked for opportunities to meet Danes, Germans and Swedes informally and ask about their hopes and dreams, their school and work lives, their actual experience with how the "official" party line plays out in practice. As expected, it was the students who were most candid. And as in the United States, wide discrepancies sometimes exist between what our policies promise and what happens in schools and in the workplace.

The choice of Arhus, Denmark and Wolfenbuttel/Braunschweig, Germany was purely a matter of chance: the team leader had been a host parent for exchange students from those communities. The decision to divide our time between federal and state bureaucrats and "typical" communities (resembling most U.S. school districts) paid rich dividends. Finding our way to local agencies, schools, and organizations was made much easier with the aid of a student guide and his family connections which opened up many doors, sometimes for the first time to visitors from the United States. The many individuals on the other side of the Atlantic who assisted us before and during the visit are chronicled in the acknowledgments. We developed lasting friendships, and each person will be long remembered by every one on the study team.

Center for Learning and Competitiveness

Advisory Board

The Honorable William E. Brock, *Chair*
Senior Partner,
The Brock Group

Dr. Anthony P. Carnevale
Vice President & Director of Human
Resource Studies,
Committee for Economic Development

Nancy S. Grasmick
State Superintendent of Schools, Maryland

Dr. Herbert J. Grover
Professor of Education
University of Wisconsin at Green Bay

Mayor Vera Katz
Portland, Oregon

Eugenia Kemble
Assistant to the President for Educational Issues
American Federation of Teachers/AFL-CIO

The Honorable John R. McKernan, Jr.
Governor of Maine

Hilary C. Pennington
President,
Jobs for the Future

William B. Rouse
Chief Executive Officer
Search Technology, Inc.

Marc Tucker
President,
National Center on Education and the Economy

Professional and Administrative Staff

Anne Heald, Executive Director

Samantha S. Guerry, Associate Director for Policy and Programs

Mark W. Scott, Associate Director for Policy and Programs

Anna Danneger, Research Assistant

Alison Martin, Special Assistant

Comparative Learning Team Report Series

- **Career Guidance Practices in Northern Europe: Implications for U.S. School-to-Work Programs**
- **Designing Quality Programs: International Lessons on Youth Employment Preparation**
- **Education for Employment in the New Economy**
- **The Role of Standards, Assessment and Credentialing in Educating the High Performance Worker: Lessons from Denmark and Great Britain**
- **School-to-Work Transition in the U.S.: The Case of the Missing Social Partners**

School of Public Affairs
University of Maryland
College Park, Maryland 20742
phone 301.405 6344
fax 301.403 4675